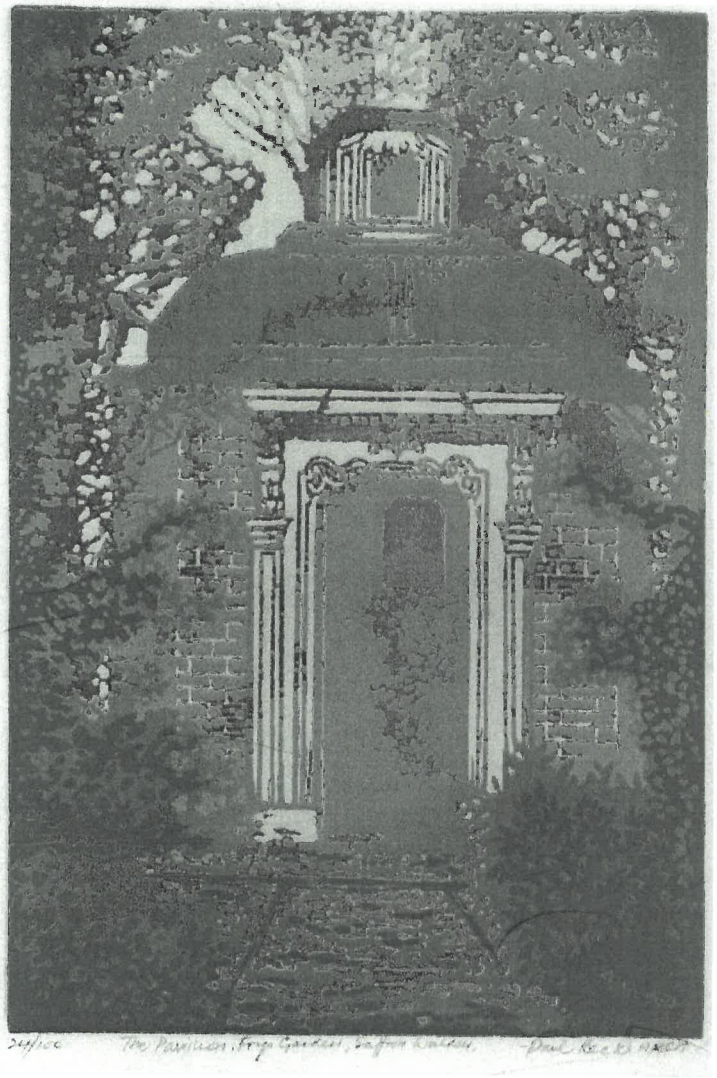

The Pavilion, Bridge End Gardens, Paul **Beck, Linocut**

Don't forget that you can follow our activities and comments on Facebook and Twitter

Fry Art Gallery, 19a Castle Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1BD

01799 513779 www.fryartgallery.org

Follow us on Twitter

Like Us On Facebook

NEWSLETTER JULY 2020

THE FRY ART GALLERY SOCIETY

Greetings and good news!

Thank you for your forbearance when we were obliged to shut down in a hurry, and for waiting, along with us, for the pandemic to continue on its way, after which we have all begun to emerge.

WE ARE RE-OPENING!

We will be opening again on AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY, the 31st at 2.15pm and at present plan to continue up to and including 1st November.

In October we will review matters with a view to opening at weekends for a short period, but will advise you about this in October.

Please see page 2 for details of the new admission arrangements.

WE HOPE TO START WORK NEXT YEAR ON EXTENDING THE GALLERY, BUT IT DOES DEPEND UPON THE LAST THRUST OF THE APPEAL.

Please read what is envisaged and how we are now relying on members on page 4.

OPENING ARRANGEMENTS

We have had to juggle to combine our responsibilities for your safety, the safety of the invigilators who volunteer to keep the Gallery open, and the public at large, in the context of best practice for galleries and public places. Advice on this has only been available since mid-July, and time is needed to perfect implementation.

PRE- BOOKED ADMISSIONS

The regulations about social distancing when applied in a restricted building like ours means that we will have to limit the number of visitors at any one time. Queuing outside the premises is not possible without blocking the narrow pathway, and so we have had to introduce timed entry on the hour for up to ten visitors, and for a 45 minute slot allocated for your visit. (The last 15 minutes is to enable cleaning requirements to be carried out before the next entry.) Once admitted it will be much as before, but with observing social distancing.

To assist we are using a free booking system provided by The Art Fund, and this will be a reassurance if you are coming from afar and want to plan your arrangements with confidence. For visitors who are not aware of these arrangements we will, of course, do our best to accommodate them if and when the circumstances permit.

DETAILS OF HOW TO BOOK

To book, please visit ***https://the-fry-art-gallery.arttickets.org.uk***

There will also be a link from our own website ***www.fryartgallery.org***

A REMINDER

Our opening times until November 1st are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons from 2-5pm; on Saturdays from 11am-5pm and on Bank Holidays and Sundays from 2.15- 5pm.

THE TWO EXHIBITIONS

The two exhibitions that have been ready since April are ***Random Spectacular at the Fry*** and ***Walter Hoyle: a versatile artist.***

Random Spectacular is an exhibition of over 100 items, without a chosen theme, save that they have been selected from the Permanent Collection by over forty-five personalities in the arts world, including Maggi Hambling, Angie Lewin, David Gentleman, Peter Brookes, Frances Spalding, Iestyn Davies and Oliver Soden. Their selection includes favourites as well as surprising items, and a number of invitees have contributed short items to accompany the hand list. To coincide with the exhibition another edition in the St Judes popular ***Random Spectacular*** series has been produced, and all the profits will go to the Appeal. See page 5.

Walter Hoyle - a versatile artist

Walter Hoyle, who died in 2000, had his first dedicated exhibition at the Fry in 1993, and this exhibition draws on the Gallery's own extensive collection of his work as well as a large loan from his estate, courtesy of Denise and Nina Hoyle. It will, as the title says, show a versatile artist, who lived for twenty years in and around Great Bardfield, combined working for the Post Office Savings Bank, the BBC, and on wallpaper designs as well as important work as a head of a department for 20 years at the Cambridge School of Art.

The exhibition coincides with the publication of a new book about Hoyle, which includes an extract from his previously unpublished memoir, along with contributions from Denise, his wife, Martin Salisbury, Chloe Cheese and Emma Mason. This book helps fill the unfortunate omission of any previous estimation of his work. Details are on page 5.

The previously planned exhibition - ***Lithographic Fever*** - has had to be postponed until 2021.

THE APPEAL

The Appeal to extend and improve facilities in the Gallery was extensively described in the March 2020 Newsletter. The planned work would enable a new step-free access, provide storage space now that full capacity has been reached, additional exhibition facilities and overdue improvements to the services and building at an estimated cost of £650,000. The Appeal was to raise a further £425,000 to meet this sum. The appeal was almost immediately hit by the arrival of the Covid-19 virus epidemic, and the havoc that this has caused to everybody since. It will therefore be no surprise when we report that only £102,000 has been raised (including £86,500 generously donated by 235 of our 1,235 members) and that the Appeal effectively stalled in mid-April.

The Society has therefore reassessed how to progress. We cannot stand still, because we are currently renting premises in the Saffron Walden Museum grounds in anticipation of having to use them temporarily while the work in the Gallery is carried out. The practical benefit, had we got a step-free access for the Gallery has been shown already this year, because a second exit would have enabled the introduction of a circulatory system, and with it a better solution to observing social distancing requirements upon re-opening the Gallery.

After careful consideration it has been decided that we must accept that the applications already made to charitable Trust funds are unlikely to reach the sum we had previously estimated because their attention has now been diverted to post-pandemic needs. We shall therefore proceed with a slimmed down scheme costing £420,000, giving a new funding target to be reached of £205,000. **We still need £103,000 before we can move forward.**

A separate letter from David Oelman, the Society's Chairman, is enclosed with this Newsletter. We earnestly request that you give this serious consideration. Reaching this sum will enable better and urgently required facilities to be built during 2021, while leaving over to more propitious times desirable, but deferrable, improvements to the insulation of the building, renewing the roof, and improved display lighting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Due to the continuing restrictions on large gatherings the AGM, which was previously notified as being held on July 30th, has now been postponed until a later date. Details will be circulated in the next Newsletter. The Report of the Trustees and Accounts for the year ended on 31 December 2019 are available to read or download from our website ***www.fryartgallery.org/ReportandAccounts2019.pdf***.

Four Trustees have decided to step down as Trustees from the end of this month. Roger Mead deserves particular mention as he has been responsible for the never-ending tasks involved in the behind-the-scenes maintenance of the Gallery for 26 years. Jane Pearson has acted as the Trustee particularly liaising with the voluntary invigilators, who effectively "deliver" the Gallery to the public throughout the year, while Tony White has developed our publicity into the expanding channels of Facebook and Instagram. Keith Nuttall has found time to be of practical assistance at all times whilst also completing a PhD. We are very much indebted to all four for the nature and the reliability of their services.

BOOKS FOR SALE (Please send cheques with your order.)

1. ***The Random Spectacular*** £18.00 plus £4.00 postage
The production edition was a run of 1,300 copies and of these all have been sold but the Gallery still has copies for sale.

2 ***Walter Hoyle - a versatile artist*** edited by Julia and Andrew Collins is £ 10.00 plus £3.00 postage

3 ***Hornet & Wild Rose: the art of Tirzah Garwood*** (£242, post free)
This was anticipated in the March Newsletter, and now that a copy has been received its splendour can be seen. It is printed to an unusually high standard, making the whole 230 pages into a work of art in itself. Anne Ullmann deals in comprehensive detail with every facet of her mother's life, embracing her early prowess in wood engraving, and developing the art of marbled paper design, to the final years of her short life during which, often bed-bound, she painted some thirty remarkable oils. The

whole book, of which only 475 copies are available, is extensively illustrated, amply complementing the text.

We have one inspection copy. If you wish to purchase a copy in the Gallery, please use the form provided in the Gallery or contact The Fleece Press at 95 Denby Lane, Upper Denby, Huddersfield, HD8 8TZ 01226 792200, mentioning the Fry Gallery so that we receive our commission.

4 ***Eric Ravilious at the Fry.*** (£15.00 plus £3 postage)
Published by us last year, it is not easily obtained elsewhere but is a well produced hard-back, 56pp, profusely illustrated commentary with original essays by Frances Spalding and Alan Powers, along with a reprinted 1947 reminiscence by Tirzah Ravilious (née Garwood).

5 ***Michael Rothenstein at the Fry Art Gallery.*** (£6 plus £2.50 postage)
Published by us, with an introductory essay by Gill Saunders of the V&A Museum. Paperback, 64 pp , including 40 pages of coloured illustrations.

6 ***Artists at the Fry*** - the fourth edition of which was mentioned in the last Newsletter - has now been re- scheduled for 2021.

AUTUMN LECTURES

The pandemic has produced so much uncertainty about the coming months that we shall not be holding our usual Atumn lecture series this year. We hope to resume in 2021.

FINANCIAL BEQUESTS

We have recently been notified of two bequests. We are always very grateful to receive bequests. If you would like to include a financial gift to the Society in your will do please contact the Treasurer (*martin.gruselle@fryartgallery.org*) .If you would like to leave a specific item, like a picture, it would be helpful if you were able to privately inform the Chairman, David Oelman, at *david.oelman@fryartgallery.org*.

THE TANNER TRUST

The Tanner Trust was created with funds left by Basil Tanner, OBE, who was born and educated in Saffron Walden, the son of Alderman Ernest Tanner, a well known local Liberal supporter, wholesale grocer and a larger than life character in the town during the early and mid- 20th century years. Basil Tanner, an early leader in the emerging field of central heating, died in 1991, having previously devised a charitable trust . It was intended to help the young, the old and the disadvantaged but over the years the Trustees widened its scope, and this enabled them to give regular support to the Fry Gallery. In particular we owe it to the Tanner Trust *inter alia* that we have the shelves and display area in the entrance lobby, the glass door leading into the main gallery, and also the well designed (and productive) donations box. The Trust now feels it has run its course over twenty five years, and will wind down next year. We have every reason to thank the Trust for their encouragement and support.

WHY "THE FRY GALLERY"?

Those entering the Gallery pass a bust on their left in the hallway as they go down the steps. It is of the Rt. Hon. Lewis Fry MP, by John Havard Thomas, around 1882, and visitors might well wonder why he is on display. The explanation is that he is the second milestone in the history of the building. The first is Francis Gibson, who in 1857, built it to complement his work in establishing Bridge End Gardens. The final, and most recent milestone, is the sale of the Gallery freehold by the Fry family in 2015. Along the way we adopted our name, and the purpose of this article is to provide the context.

Who was Francis Gibson?

Francis Gibson, born in 1805 and died in 1859, was a member of a Victorian dynasty who conscientiously and generously served Saffron Walden during the 19th century. His grandfather, George Gibson, moved to the town in 1763 when he opened a shop. His father, Atkinson Francis Gibson, later married Elizabeth Wyatt, whose local family were brewers, and this became his business, along with land transactions. On his death in 1829 a

well-established business passed to his three sons, Wyatt George, Jabez and Francis. It was Wyatt's son, George Stacey Gibson (1818-1883) who was ultimately to be the principal benefactor of many major buildings in the town, although the tradition of public service and charitable giving had already been established by his father and uncles. *Mr Saffron Walden* (Phillimore & Co 2008) by John Collingwood recounts in detail not only GSG's life and work but also of the wider family.

Francis is described by Collingwood as "not a businessman but a naturalist and artist" but this is not quite the whole picture. Francis concerned himself with the family brewery and the creation of the Saffron Walden & North Essex Bank, and after his marriage to Elizabeth Pease of Darlington in 1829 he became involved in his father-in-law's business, creating the first steam powered railway between Stockton and Darlington. He was also involved in the development of Middlesborough as a prosperous town. From 1838 until his death he was a member of Saffron Walden Borough Council, the insignia of which hangs in the Gibson Room of the present Gallery. While Gibson was certainly rich he also had a strong social conscience derived from his family's association with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) but he also found time to develop his interest in landscape gardening and as a naturalist and amateur artist. In 1842 he bought Balder Grange near Darlington, which he extended and also created a formal garden, akin to the one he had previously established in Saffron Walden.

Francis Gibson's relevance to the Gallery is a consequence of his development of what is now known as Bridge End Gardens. It is evident that he continued to develop a garden his father, Atkinson, had commenced in 1794 when he lived in number 7 High Street. Francis lived in The Close, which is on the corner of Castle Street and the High Street and which, until the 1930s, extended into what is currently the adjacent public garden. This large property meant that developing land the other side of Castle Street was a logical move for one with a passion for gardening. The development of the Garden, well documented in *Bridge End Garden, Creation & Restoration* by John Bosworth (Uttlesford District Council, 2006) was completed by 1840 and today, following extensive

restoration earlier this century, it is much as Francis planned it to be, including a maze.

Having completed the garden, Francis built a gallery in 1857. The architect is not known. Francis was a discerning wealthy collector of art, which at various times included a Gainsborough landscape, a Rembrandt, a Velazquez, and a Vermeer subsequently sold in 1901 to the Frick Museum, New York. In the absence of evidence to the contrary it is likely that the gallery and gardens were primarily for the enjoyment of his family and friends until after he had died.

The Rt.Hon. Lewis Fry, MP (1832- 1921)
Lewis Fry marks the second milestone in the Gallery's history because it was he who, despite his domicile and activities being in his home town of Bristol, decided to maintain ownership of both the Garden and Gallery when they became part of his responsibilities in 1866, after his wife inherited the estate, and again in 1870 when she died.

Francis Gibson had died in 1859, and his wife, Elizabeth, in 1866. The estate of his widow, and mother of Francis (called Frank, born 1831) and Elizabeth (called Bessie, born 1830, both children having been given their parent's first name) passed to Bessie following the earlier death in 1862 of Frank. By then Bessie had married into the Fry family of Bristol in 1858. This marriage had not taken place without some heart-searching. The two children and their mother were evidently closely knit and from the volumes of diaries kept by them all (now in the Gibson Library, Saffron Walden,) and the research done by Christine Plumb, (published in the journal *Saffron Walden History* no. 36 Autumn 1989) we are able to get some insight into how she came to be married. Besides strong family bonds, Bessie, who was 28 years old, was also constrained by the then Quaker practice of not marrying out of the faith. She had at least three suitors, rejected the first when aged 21, a second when 28, and then in June 1858 she was told that Lewis Fry "wanted to see her" (Christine Plumb's phrase). Bessie evidently agonised, for whilst accepting his "superior intellect", she wrote in her diary that she wished she felt "all as strong as his love is".

However, three months later she married him, but still observing in her diary (November 1858) that "Lewis is a great sweetener of the cup - but how Papa was first in all my past life."

Lewis Fry is important because he and his wife first jointly elected to retain the family interest in Saffron Walden and to allow the public to have access to both the Garden and the Gallery, the contents of which he augmented, and he continued this practice after Bessie had died. He qualified as a solicitor, was elected a Liberal Member of Parliament in 1878-85 and as a Liberal Unionist member 1885-1892 and 1895-1900. In 1901 he was, unusually, appointed as a Privy Counsellor (hence the Rt.Hon.) in his own right rather than by occupancy of ministerial office. He was much involved in the civic affairs of Bristol and played a major part in the creation and early development of the University.

In 1918 (when he was 86) Fry wrote to the Borough Council to say that he was no longer able to keep the Gardens freely open to the public as they had been for the past 50 years. As a result the Council entered into a maintenance lease for what were then known as Fry's Gardens. Since his death in 1921 the Fry family have continued this arrangement to the present day. The gallery building became known as the Gibson Gallery, for which a modest admission charge was applied, and the family retained responsibility for it until the late 1960's when they closed it completely. The works of art then hanging in the smaller room - largely by L.G. Fry, RBA, (Lewis George, son of the MP) remained on the premises until 2015, when they were returned to the family.

Why "Fry"?

When in 1985, three generations after Lewis Fry, the family agreed to lease the Gibson Gallery to the newly formed Society it seemed appropriate not only to change its name to indicate a new purpose, but also to adopt one that acknowledged the long-standing tradition of the family in enabling its continued use as a public resource. With a repairing lease of £1 pa, (which the landlord had to be reminded to accept annually), the Fry Art Gallery Society re-opened the premises as the Fry Public Art Gallery in

order to differentiate it from a well-established Fry Gallery in Mayfair. By the time the proprietor, Mr Cyril Fry (no relation), had closed his business the word "public" had, in practice, largely been dropped.

The final milestone has been the support of the later generations of the Fry family, which firstly enabled its re-opening in 1987 after years of closure, and their agreement, in 2015, to sell the freehold to the now burgeoning Society.

What the new title had not intended to do was to be confused with Roger Fry, the painter and critic, Bloomsbury Group member and champion of Post Impressionism for although he was distantly related he was not, as was Lewis Fry, one of the "chocolate Frys", with their strong Bristol and West Country roots.

Since becoming a charitable incorporated organisation in 2017 we are now officially known as The Fry Art Gallery Society, although in every day conversation the capital T is rarely articulated.

Nigel Weaver

THE FRY ART GALLERY
SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX

29 July 2020

Dear Member

Appeal to extend the Fry Art Gallery and improve the existing galleries

I am writing to provide you with an update on the result so far of our Appeal to raise £435,000 new funds to build a single storey extension to the Gallery (creating separate step-free access and a dedicated fire escape route, provide additional exhibition space and increase our Collection storage) and make improvements to the existing galleries, at a cost of £650,000.

The coronavirus pandemic has seriously impacted on our efforts, because some grant-making Trusts have postponed decision making until later in 2020, and others have diverted their resources to assist those affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. We are most grateful to the 235 of our 1300 members who have so far donated a total of £86,500 (including Gift aid); 3 Charitable Trusts have donated or promised a further £15,500. Thus we have so far raised only £102,000 towards our original target.

Consequently the Trustees have concluded that they can only, at this stage, seek to raise sufficient funds to extend the Gallery at an estimated cost of £420,000, and must postpone making the improvements until a later date. This reduces our target to £205,000, so that we need to raise a further £103,000 before we can move forward and enhance the Gallery in size and visitor facilities.

We are appealing to you, if you have not already done so, to donate whatever sum you feel you can afford, using the enclosed Donation form. This gives you the opportunity of making a single payment or creating a monthly standing order for a fixed term of 12 months. The Trustees will continue to seek funding from those Trusts which might yet give to our Appeal.

Please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing appeal@fryartgallery.org if you would like more information; and please tell your friends about this Appeal if you think they might be able to help. We have a unique Collection and, with your assistance, we intend to build on our past success to provide the best possible legacy for the next generation.

Chairman

19a Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1BD
01799 513779 www.fryartgallery.org
Regd. Charity No.1167717

The Fry Art Gallery Society
Gallery Extension and Improvements Donation Form

Regd Charity No 1167717

When completed please return this form to:-
The Treasurer, The Fry Art Gallery Society, 25 Barley Road, Great Chishill, Royston SG8 8SB.

I am happy to support the Fry Art Gallery Society in raising funds to finance the extension/improvements to the Fry Art Gallery and am donating £.....

□ I enclose a Cheque for this amount payable to "The Fry Art Gallery Society"

OR

□ I have made an Internet Banking payment of this amount to the account below

OR

□ I have set up a Standing Order of £..... per month for 12 months commencing ..... (insert start date)

Payable to: Barclays Bank, 12A Market Place, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR.
Account Name: Fry Art Gallery; Sort Code 20-74-05; Account No. 13512290.
Please give your name as the reference when making an Internet Banking Payment or when setting up a Standing Order.

Please tick whichever of the above applies

□ Yes, please add Gift Aid

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any such payments I make in the future, or have made in the past 4 years to the Fry Art Gallery Society. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, you change your address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

□ No, Gift Aid does not apply

Please tick whichever of the above applies

Signature .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....Post Code.....

E-mail Address .....

If you wish your donation to be anonymous, please tick. □

All Donations will be acknowledged by email. Thank you.